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Ninety Years of Service

1850 - 1940

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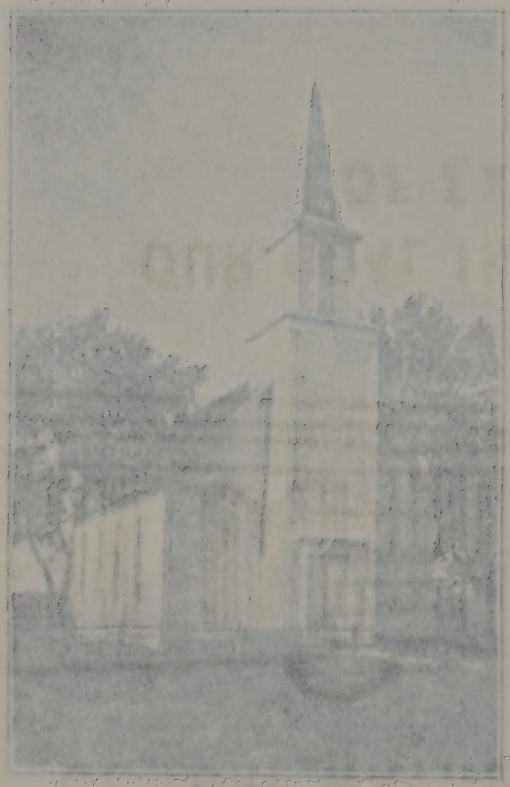
THE NEW SWEDEN METHODIST CHURCH

1850 - 1940

Located in the New Sweden Community

Three Miles Northwest of Lockridge, Iowa

Rec Order-Hist Bldg
Iowa American Revolution
Bicentennial Commission
STATE HOUSE



THE NEW SWEDEN METHODIST CHURCH

Located in the New Sweden Community

Three Miles Northwest of Lockridge, Iowa

New Sweden Methodist Church
Ninetieth Anniversary Celebration
New Sweden Methodist Church, 1850-1940 Located in the New Sweden community three miles northwest of Lockridge, Iowa

Book being xeroxed from Iowa bicent record center

1951919

Rev. O. G. Sandstrom

The Pastor's Greeting

As Pastor I greet you—members, former members, former pastors and friends far and near—on this festive occasion.

I am happy to have a part in this Anniversary Celebration, and I consider it an honor to have the privilege of serving this historic church, the oldest in Swedish Methodism west of the Mississippi River, and to add my name to the roster of its pastors. But as I do so my prayer is that I may be worthy of a place with the mighty men of God who have served before me.

The founders and other faithful laborers of our church, whom we honor at this time, should challenge each member to a renewed consecration to carry on the work of Christ which they so valiantly started in this community. They have labored and we must enter into their labors. They have builded and we must continue to build on the One foundation, and there is none other foundation than Jesus Christ.

When the history of the church is written in years to come may it reveal a record of the influence of men and women who have lived Christian lives because of the "little white church on the hilltop."

To you who have builded, to you who now build, may God's choicest blessings be yours.

Officers of the Church

Bishop
Ernest L. Waldorf, D. D., LLD., Chicago Temple, Chicago, Illinois.

District Superintendent
Rev. Carl A. Holmgren, 128 Grace Court, Aurora, Illinois

Pastor
Rev. O. G. Sandstrom, 538 S. Leebrick St., Burlington, Iowa.

Recording and Disbursing Steward
Virgil Trabert

Pianist
Mrs. Earl Walgren

Board of Trustees
Frank Trabert, Grant Jacobson, Earl Walgren,
Edward Nelson, Ralph Smithburg.

Board of Stewards
Virgil Trabert, Frank Trabert, Russell Johnson, Leroy Linn,
Grant Jacobson, Harold Nelson.

Sunday School
Superintendent, Russell Johnson
Secretary, Hazel Jacobson
Treasurer, Dorothy Hostetler

Ladies Aid Society
President, Mrs. Harold Nelson
Vice President, Mrs. Leroy Linn
Secretary, Mrs. Frank Trabert
Treasurer, Mrs. Bertha Kauffman

Membership Roll

Carlberg, Mr. and Mrs. D. V.
Chapius, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis E.
Carlson, Norris H.
Carlson, Vincent C.
Hostetler, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur
Hostetler, Raymond N.
Hostetler, Dorothy G.
Hostetler, Paul A.
Hostetler, Richard S.
Jacobson, Mr. and Mrs. Grant
Jacobson, Max B.
Jacobson, Hazel I.
Jacobson, Erma R.
Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Nicklas
Johnson, Frank
Johnson, Clara A.
Johnson, Russell
Johnson, Howard V.
Johnson, C. Donald
Kauffman, Mrs. Bertha
Kauffman, Retha
Larson, Fred G.
Larson, Ruth E.
Linn, Mr. and Mrs. Leroy H.
Myers, Mrs. Richard
Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Edward
Nelson, Eleonora V.
Nelson, Willard S.
Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Harold
Nelson, Evelyn L.
Sherman, Adelia
Smithburg, Mrs. G. A.
Smithburg, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph
Smithburg, Minnie L.
Stone, Gifford B.
Trabert, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin A.
Trabert, Virgil
Turner, Mrs. Eva M.
Turner, Wm. H.
Turner, Earl B.
Vorhies, Mrs. Emma
Walgren, Wesley
Walgren, Mr. and Mrs. Earl
Walgren, Richard O.
West, B. Alice
West Mildred I.
West, M. Evelyn

Ninetieth Anniversary Program

June 14, 15, 16, 1940

FRIDAY, 8:00 P. M.

Opening Service. Rev. C. A. Holmgren, district superintendent, speaker.

SATURDAY, 10:30 A. M.

Prayer and Praise Service, with visiting pastors bringing short messages.

8:00 P. M.

Musical Program, and an address by Dr. C. G. Wallenius of Evanston, Illinois, editor of "Sandebudet" ("The Messenger").

SUNDAY, 9:30 A. M.

Sunday School. Russell Johnson, superintendent.

10:30 A. M.

Morning Worship. Rev. H. E. Weaver of Minneapolis, former pastor of our church, preaching. Communion Service. Baptism.

Basket dinner served at the church following this service.

2:30 P. M.

ANNIVERSARY SERVICE, with Dr. C. G. Wallenius giving the historical address. Greetings from former pastors and former members. Special recognitions. Memorial service, followed by a dedicatory service at the grave of Peter Cassel in honor of his memory.

At the close of the service a light supper served by the Ladies Aid society.

8:00 P. M.

Evening Service, with the closing address by Rev. H. E Weaver.

Special music rendered at all services, with Mr. Gust Scott, the well known evangelistic singer, in charge.

History of the Church

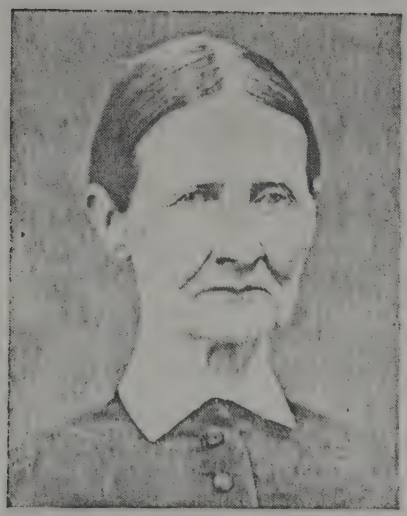
THE NEW SWEDEN METHODIST CHURCH owes its beginning to the hopes and purposes of its founders, whose religious zeal prompted them to bind themselves together for the purpose of religious expression. The history of the church is so closely knit with the story of these founders that to really appreciate the one we must take a glimpse of the other.

The outstanding personality of the group who founded the church was Peter Cassel of the Kisa parish of the province of Ostergotland, Sweden. For a period of two or more years he had been urging a group of his relatives and friends to join him in a party to emigrate to America. He was a man of considerable prominence in his parish; a man of about fifty-five years of age, independent and courageous. In the early part of May, 1845, the party set out via canal and lake travel for Gothenburg, reaching that port city May 21st. The boat on which they were to take passage was considered unsafe and they were compelled to wait until June 24th, when they took passage on a ship named "Superb." During the long wait the men secured work on a building project whereby they were able to pay their expenses during that time.

The party consisted of the following families:

Peter Cassel and his wife Catherine and children, Charles J., Andrew F., Matilda, Catherine and Gustave; John Danielson and wife Elizabeth and children, A. Victor, John A., Maria A., Matilda S. and Frank O.; Eric Peter and Sarah Anderson, brother and sister of Mrs. Peter Cassel; John Munson and wife Catherine and children, Mary and Louisa; Peter Anderson and wife and three children. All were from the Kisa Parish, except the Munson and Peter Anderson families. After a fortunate voyage of eight weeks they arrived at New York, and during a stay there of eight days they attended gospel meetings on a vessel known as the "Bethel Ship." The preaching by Rev. Olof G. Hedstrom and his brother Jonas on this ship fired their souls with a zeal which they carried with them into their new wilderness home beyond the Mississippi River. In 1845 Rev. Olof G. Hedstrom founded Methodism among the Scandinavians in New York, where he preached for eighteen years on this famous ship. He is known as the "father of Swedish Methodism" in this country.

Accidentally the party met Peter Dahlberg, who had been in America two years and was in New York to meet his family, and they accompanied the group on their journey westward. The Cassel party set out with the intention of going to Pine

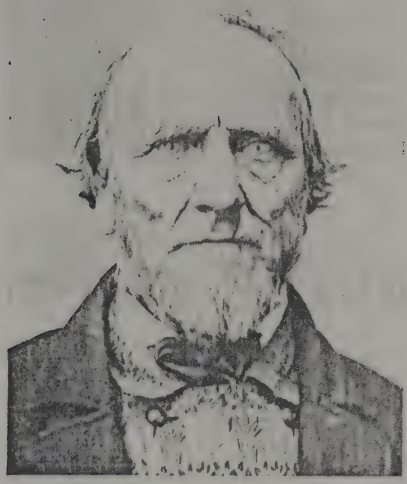


Catherine Anderson Cassel, (left) wife of Peter Cassel and member of the pioneer group who emigrated to the New Sweden locality, and who helped to wrest a home and to build a community and the church out of the virgin forest. Shown with her is Carrie Cassel Jacobson, (right) her youngest daughter, and the only surviving member of this family.

Lake, Wisconsin. Mr. Dahlberg advised them to go to Iowa because there was better land there. He proved to be of much help to the party as he had been West before. Their trip took them overland via Philadelphia and Pittsburg. From Pittsburg the trip continued via boat down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi River to Burlington, Iowa. From Burlington travel was by wagon, but most of the party traveled on foot. On August 16th, 1845, they reached a point about a mile northwest of where Lockridge is now located, and there they were granted the privilege by Wm. Hopkirk to occupy an old log house which had practically no roof and it rained almost daily for two weeks. In a short time they purchased land from the Government near the center of Lockridge Township. Other emigrants followed and within a span of fifteen years the settlement grew to a community of about five to six hundred Swedish people.

During the year 1848 quite a number of Swedish emigrants arrived and religious services were held in the different homes. From this time to 1851 three Swedish churches were organized—Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist—and church buildings were erected within a little more than half a mile of each other, and during the following years there was much religious zeal in the community.

As soon as the Cassel party had established their homes they began to consider the establishment of a place of worship. As previously mentioned, the religious services were held in the homes. The Methodist group met for the most part in the John

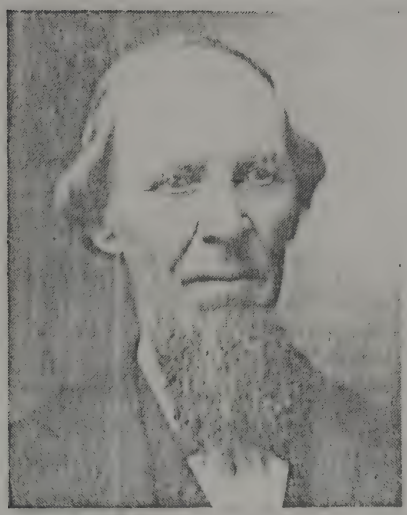


John Danielson was born in Hyklinge parish, Sweden, August 25, 1799. He passed away November 8, 1884. Mrs. Danielson was born in the same neighborhood August 18, 1792, and passed away August 31, 1885.

Danielson home, which was a good sized log house, and which had become more or less a community center, as well as a religious center. Peter Cassel was the religious leader of the group and served as local preacher.

Rev. Jonas Hedstrom, one of the founders of Swedish Methodism and organizer of the early Swedish Methodist churches in western Illinois, came from Victoria, Illinois, to hold evangelistic meetings in the spring of 1850. On the day of Pentecost he preached the first sermon in the Danielson home. As a result of these meetings, the church was definitely organized by him in November of the same year and became a part of the Central Illinois Conference. Two different dates are given in the records regarding the organization of the church, but this one is believed to be correct. It was the first Swedish Methodist church west of the Mississippi River. It is claimed that it was the third oldest church in Swedish Methodism. The charter members were as follows: Peter Cassel, John Danielson, Philip Anderson, Andrew Castile, Peter Smithburg, Andrew Cassel, J. P. Forman, Hagg, Jocknick, and their wives; J. Castile and Mrs. Orn. After the organization, the church was served for a short time by a preacher named G. Smith. He was followed by Peter Cassel, who was the first regularly appointed pastor.

Rev. Peter Cassel, born October 13, 1790, in Kisa, Ostergotland, Sweden, was ordained by Bishop Janes, and served the church for three years. While this was a most difficult period, he served faithfully and preached the Word with power and had



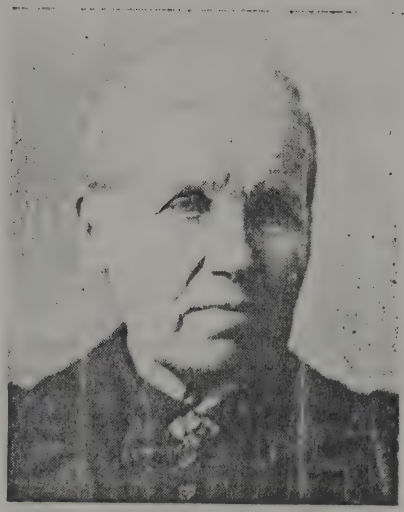
Andrew Cassel was born in the Kisa parish, Sweden, December 3, 1831. He passed away July 29, 1915.

His wife, Louisa, was born in Sweden, August 19, 1835, and passed away June 26, 1900.

the confidence of all the people. A declaration by this man of God indicates how firmly his faith and doctrine were grounded: "You all know me as one accustomed to hearing a preacher of the pure doctrine and grounded in the correct doctrine of the atonement through Jesus our Lord and Redeemer, and therefore have the assurance that I would never subscribe to any doctrine that does not rest on this foundation." The church, as well as the entire community, lost their great and good leader when he was called to his eternal reward March 4th, 1857. He lies buried in the cemetery outside the church, and his grave is marked by a stone upon which has recently been placed a bronze tablet by his descendants, and is dedicated at this anniversary. A picture of him is not available.

Mrs. Carrie Cassel Jacobson, youngest daughter of Peter and Katherine Cassel, is the only surviving member of this pioneer family. She was born in New Sweden, Iowa, August 14, 1851, and is almost as old as the church her father helped to establish, and of which she became an early member. Although she lives in Creston, Iowa, she has never lost interest in this church and community.

The congregation continued to meet in the private homes until the membership became too large to meet in them with comfort. Therefore, it was found necessary to make plans for the erecting of a separate building in which to worship. They realized, however, that such an undertaking would involve a great deal of sacrifice, as the congregation was relatively small in number and no one had an abundance of material wealth. But they were



August Walgren served the church as it's pastor in the years 1868 and 1894. In the intervening years and until his death he supplied the pulpit whenever the pastor was absent, and also preached the Word of God in the surrounding towns. He rendered this ministry, for which he was ordained, and at the same time took charge of his farm. He was a great asset to the life and service of the church and community.

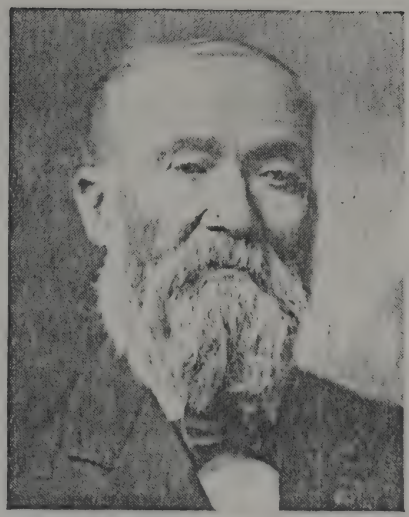
Mr. Walgren was born in Sweden September 11, 1827, and passed away March 17, 1914. His wife, Anna S. Walgren, was born in Sweden July 20, 1829, and passed away September 5, 1917.

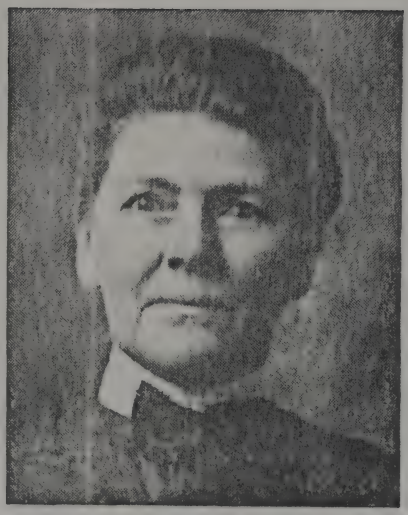
One of the surviving children of Mr. and Mrs. Walgren is Wesley Walgren, one of the oldest members of our church.

willing to make the sacrifice and in this spirit a house of worship was eventually realized.

John Danielson, who had bought land from the Government, and lived about a half mile southwest of the church, donated a lot large enough for a church building and cemetery. The first one to be buried in this cemetery was Carl Smithburg, twenty-one years of age. When he was dying he asked the congregation to sing. They sang and he joined in a clear voice and passed on to join the Church Triumphant. In this cemetery are buried the Swedish Methodist pioneers of this community and many of their descendants.

During the ministry of Rev. Andrew Ericson, who succeeded Rev. Peter Cassel in 1854, a log church building was started. He did not succeed in raising sufficient funds to finish it, due partly to some misunderstanding among the members. It was Rev. Peter Nyberg (1857 - 1859) who had the joy of seeing the log church completed, and being a carpenter by trade he took an active part in the work of building it. The congregatioin worshipped in this log church for sixteen years. The original corner stone is still preserved.





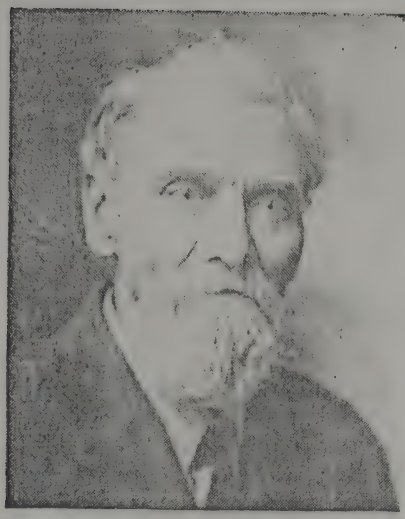
Gustav A. Smithburg was born August 5, 1842. He passed away August 5, 1930. Mrs. Smithburg was born September 27, 1850, and is still living about half a mile east of the church.

It was during the ministry of Rev. Peter Nyberg that the church in Burlington was organized, and he also served it for the first year in connection with the pastorate of the New Sweden church. It is quite a coincidence that, after these many years, the New Sweden church should be served by the pastor of the Burlington church.

The present church building was erected in 1871, during the ministry of Rev. A. G. Engstrom. He also was an excellent carpenter and assisted in the work. He made the pulpit, altar rail, and the pews. The church was dedicated on New Year's Day in 1872. Necessary improvements have been made down through the years. The latest improvement was last fall, when it was painted. This was made possible by the generous gift of money given by Lester Kauffman of Ocean View, Del., and the volunteer work by the men of our church.

The parsonage was built fifty-eight years ago, during the pastorate of Rev. P. M. Johnson. It was remodeled during the pastorate of Rev. John O. Borgeson in 1907, and Gust Scott was the carpenter employed to do the work. It also has been painted recently by the men of the church.

There are no records available regarding the history of the Sunday School. It was started, however, shortly after the organization of the church. It is believed that the first session was held in the Peter Smithburg home. His sister, Mrs. L. Mendenhall, now living in Fairfield, Iowa, is perhaps the only surviving member of that first Sunday School. Mrs. Christina Smithburg,



John Linn was for many years active in the Sunday School as teacher and superintendent. He was made local preacher in April, 1900, and continued in this capacity for about twenty years, serving as a supply when the regular minister was absent, and during such interims of varying length when no regularly assigned minister was in charge. While his religious activities were somewhat restricted by advancing age during the latter years, and removal from the immediate neighborhood of the church, his interest in the New Swehen church, which had been so close to his heart during most of his active life, remained so until the very last, when on July 8th, 1939, he passed away at the age of 81 years of age. He was born March 14, 1858, in Sweden.

the oldest living member of our church, was also one of the early scholars, having joined about 1859.

During the pastorate of Rev. John O. Borgeson the Ladies Aid Society and the Epworth League were organized.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized on the first day of January, 1906. Seventeen were present, including four men. Members were received, and the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. John O. Borgeson; vice president, Mrs. Retha Kauffman; secretary, Mrs. A. M. Kauffman; assistant secretary, Miss Effie Stephenson; treasurer, Mrs. George Stephenson. Men were received as auxiliary members. The three-fold purpose of the society was: to promote a deeper spirituality, to promote a healthy sociality, and to strengthen the finances of the church.

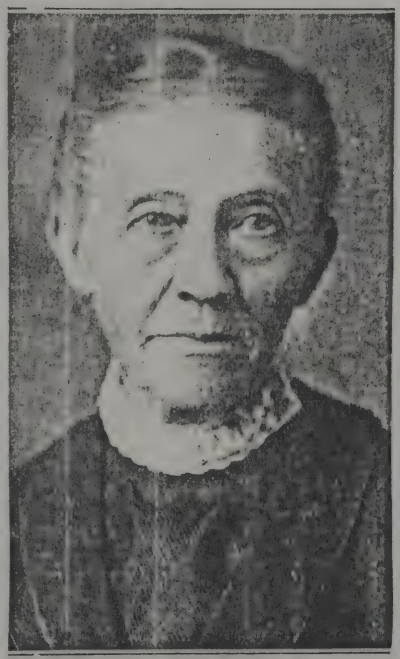
The Epworth League was organized January 4th, 1906. Seventeen were present. The following officers were elected: President, George Stephenson; first vice president, Frank Anderson; second vice president, Isaac Castile; third vice president, Mrs. John O. Borgeson; fourth vice president, Mrs. Della Kauffman; secretary, Will Turner; treasurer, Esther Rangner; organist, Maud Berg; choirister, Gust Scott. The records reveal that the League had a membership of sixty-three at one time during the period between 1906 to 1910.

After the death of his father, Andrew F. Cassel, who never became a preacher, yet as a layman he ably filled the place of his father as a leader in the church, and was honored by the Swedish Methodist churches of the conference by being sent as a lay delegate to the General Conference at Philadelphia in 1884. As a citizen he was also highly honored, serving in several elect-

ive capacities including two terms in the State Legislature. Mr. and Mrs. Cassel whole heartedly supported the church, and their six children also became active members. This family did much to advance the Kingdom of God in the community. Two of the daughters, Mrs. George Stephenson and Mrs. Gust Scott, and their husbands, are still actively interested, though their church membership has been transferred to Fairfield, where they reside.

The influence of the church was reached out even to the foreign field, when Miss Winnie Gabrielson, daughter of the pastor, Rev. John A. Gabrielson, went to India in 1917, and where she is at the present time. She has been a credit to the church, as through her evangelistic zeal many have been brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

On September 30, 1928, the church was made a part of the Fairfield Methodist circuit. This new connection was inaugurated with an appropriate program in which all the churches of the circuit participated. G. A. Smithburg, the oldest member of our church at that time, was one of the speakers. Grant Jacobson responded to the address of welcome, and the history of the church was given by the late Edward Kauffman. The church continued in this connection for one year, during which time Rev. H. E. Butler served as pastor.



Mrs. Alberta Mendenhall, one of the early members of the New Sweden church. She is still living in Fairfield, Iowa.

For a period of nearly six years (1931-May, 1937) the church was without a pastor. The only organization that functioned during this time was the Ladies Aid Society, which continued to hold monthly meetings. In May, 1937, Rev. J. E. Borgman, district superintendent, met with the members of the church and in response to their expressed desire, he appointed O. G. Sandstrom as part time pastor. Since that time he has served the charge in connection with the Burlington church, of which he is pastor. Services have been held every other Sunday afternoon. Shortly after the regular services were resumed, the pastor organized a Confirmation class of fifteen members among the young people of the church, and as a result the entire class, in addition to four others, united with the church on Sunday, June

26, 1938. The Sunday School was re-organized October 9, 1938, and sessions have been held one hour preceding the worship service.

The church was a member of the Western Swedish Conference which was organized in 1893, until the conference was merged with the Central Swedish and Northern Swedish Conferences in 1928, and then become known as the Central Northwest Conference, of which it has since been a member.

The membership of the church has never been large, but the church has exerted a powerful influence for good in the community, especially during the early days of emigration. It has been served by some of the outstanding ministers of the Conference.

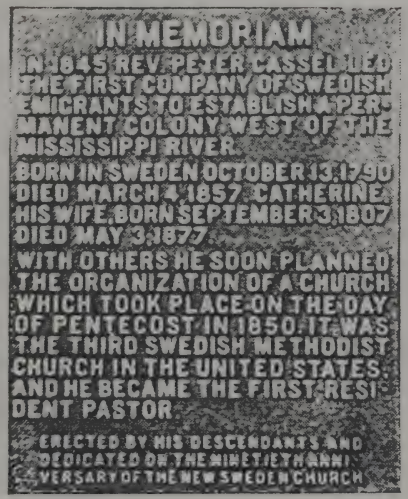
NEW SWEDEN METHODIST PARSONAGE

In Memoriam

Gustav A. Smithburg

Edward A. Kauffman
Mrs. Walter Carlson

Rev. N. G. Nelson
Henrietta Peterson Nelson



Mrs. Gust A. Rangner

John S. Linn
Emma J. Linn

Solomon Anderson
Arthur E. Anderson

Jacob Linda
Gustava Linda
Axel John Linda
Hazel Linda
Della Linda Kauffman
Claude F. Winell

John Stephenson
Matilda Stephenson
Effie E. Stephenson

Mrs. Russell Johnson

John Wesley Cassel
Pauline Cassel

Andrew H. Cassel
Louisa Cassel

Frank O. Danielson
Matilda Danielson

1951919

Rev. Oscar J. Swan
Hilma C. Swan

Susan Anderson

Victor Jacobson
Emma Jacobson

August Walgren
Anna S. Walgren

Roster of Pastors

G. Smith	1850 - 1851
Peter Cassel	1851 - 1854
Andrew Ericson	1854 - 1857
Peter Nyberg	1857 - 1859
N. O. Peterson	1859 - 1863
J. Ostlund	1863 - 1864
Peter Nyberg	1864 - 1865
J. E. Berggren	1865 - 1868
August Walgren	1868 - 1869
P. Long	1869 - 1870
A. G. Engstrom	1870 - 1872
Alfred Anderson	1872 - 1873
John A. Gabrielson	1873 - 1875
Oscar J. Swan	1875 - 1877
P. J. Peterson	1877 - 1879
N. G. Nelson	1879 - 1881
J. O. Alven	1881 - 1882
P. M. Johnson	1882 - 1883
Nels Eagle	1883 - 1885
E. G. Rosendahl	1885 - 1886
John Simpson	1886 - 1889
Carl J. Berggren	1889 - 1891
C. A. Anderson	1891 - 1892
C. M. Holmberg	1892 - 1893
S. A. Lindeberg	1893 - 1894
August Walgren	1894 - 1895
L. M. Lindstrom	1895 - 1898
H. A. Peterson	1898 - 1900
C. F. Levin	1900 - 1903
Carl Nord	1903 - 1904
John O. Borgeson	1904 - 1908
K. A. Stromberg	1908 - 1911
John P. Norton	1911 - 1913
John A. Gabrielson	1913 - 1918
H. E. Weaver	1918 - 1923
G. E. Malmquist	1923 - 1926
Magnus Weber	1926 - 1927
Edwin Sahlen	1927 - 1928
H. E. Butler	1928 - 1929
Gustav Freeman	1929 - 1931
(No Services)	1931 - 1937
O. G. Sandstrom	1937 -

The Country Preacher

—Edgar A. Guest.

I like the country ministers who serve
the Lord afar
In little towns and villages where no
great churches are.
They ride a dreary circuit when the
days are bleak and cold,
Through miles and miles of drifted snow
their services to hold.

No costly choir; no organ grand; no help
that works for hire.
Sometimes alone they ring the bell high
in that humble spire.
No gaudy lectern for the Book; no marble
pulpit there;
No padded velvet cushions for the ones
who kneel in prayer.

What paint was once upon the boards the
years have worn away,
But staunch and true unto their faith the
few brave people stay.
And day by day and year by year, denied
the world's reward,
These ministers at little posts with
courage serve the Lord.

I sometimes hear the cynics sneer that
preachers work for pay
And choose the church because it means
a comfortable way;
But hearing this, I think of those who
serve the faithful few
And spend their lives without reward the
Master's work to do.

This poem was sent in by Mr. and Mrs. Harper Jacobson of El Campo, Texas, former members of our church.

FAITH of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword:
O how our hearts beat high with joy,
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife:
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

GREETINGS FROM
FAIRFIELD METHODISTS

The Methodists of Fairfield desire to extend sincere congratulations to the New Sweden Methodist Church, upon its completion of Ninety Years of faithful service in Jefferson County. May it only be the prelude to many more years of usefulness.

The First Methodist Church
Fairfield, Iowa

CONGRATULATIONS
on your
90th Anniversary
West Hill Methodist Church
Burlington, Iowa

Congratulations
on your
90th Anniversary
M. E. TOOTHACRE
President, Farmers and Merchants
Bank, Burlington, Iowa
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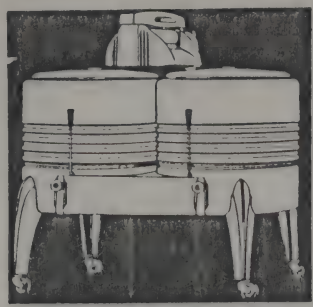

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